

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 TEL AV 06122 071248Z

65

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 /071 W

----- 007912

R 071033Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2944

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEL AVIV 6122

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IS

SUBJECT: THE ISTADRUT, THE LABOR PARTY, ELECTION REFORMS AND THE 1977
ELECTIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: HISTADRUT SECRETARY GENERAL MESHEL RECENTLY DESCRIBED TO LABOR ATTACHE AND TO SECRETARY OF LABOR USERY HIS VIEWS ON NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN HIS ORGANIZATION. THOSE ELECTIONS ARE PRESENTLY SCHEDULED FOR 1977, PRIOR TO THE NATINAL KNESSET ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, MESHEL HOPES TO HAVE THE ELECTIONS POSTPONED BECAUSE NEW ELECTORAL PROCEDURES WILL GIVE GREATER EMPHASIS TO PERSONALITIES THAN TO PARTIES AND MESHEL IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE KNESSET ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY

1. ESTABLISHED PRACTICE AS WELL AS HISTADRUT RULES REQUIRE HISTADRUT ELECTIONS TO BE HELD PRIOR TO THE KNESSET ELECTIONS. IN THIS WAY, THE ISTADRUT ELECTIONS OFTEN SERVE AS A WEATHER-VANE OF THE ISRAELI POLITICAL CLIMATE. NOW, HOWEVER, HISTADRUT SECRETARY GENERAL YERUHAM MESHEL WISHES TO DELAY THE UNION ELECTIONS UNTIL AFTER THE 1977 KNESSET ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH HE COULD PROBABLY GET MAJORITY SUPPORT IN THE EXECUTIVE BUREAU TO DO THIS, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT BECAUSE THE MAPAM FACTION OF THE ALIGNMENT, THE LIKUD, AND THE IMPORTANT HAIFA LABOR COUNCIL, WHICH HAS LONG BEEN FEUDING WITH
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 TEL AV 06122 071248Z

MESHEL, OPPOSE THE CHANGE.

2. THE REASON FOR MESHEL'S DESIRE FOR A DELAY, ASIDE FROM HIS CONCERN OVER THE SUBSTANTIAL CURRENT DISCONTENT OVER HISTADRUT'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S WAGE RESTRAINT POLICY, IS A 1974 COURT RULING WHICH REQUIRES THAT CHANGES BE MADE IN THE CONDUCT OF HISTADRUT ELECTIONS, SEPARATING LOCAL COUNCIL AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS. EACH PARTY WOULD HAVE TO DRAW UP SEPARATE LISTS FOR LOCAL AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS AND IDENTIFY THE HEADS OF THE LISTS AS THEIR CANDIDATES FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARYSHIP AND LOCAL COUNCIL HEADS, RESPECTIVELY. IN THE PAST, LOCAL AND NATIONAL LISTS WERE COMBINED AND VOTERS CHOSE PARTY LABELS. THE KEY OFFICIALS WERE THEN SELECTED BY NEGOTIATIONS ONLY AFTER THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF EACH PARTY AND FACTION HAD BEEN DETERMINED.

3. BECAUSE THE NATIONAL ELECTION SYSTEM CONTINUES TO BE HIGHLY CENTRALIZED AND BASED ON THE PARTY LIST SYSTEM, MESHEL FEARS THAT THE RESULT OF THESE REVISED HISTADRUT ELECTIONS, IF HELD PRIOR TO THE 1977 KNESSET ELECTIONS, COULD HAVE AN AS YET UNPREDICATABLE IMPACT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS. THE HISTADRUT ELECTIONS MIGHT ALSO ENGENDER RATHER DISRUPTIVE PRESSURES FOR PARTY AND ELECTORAL REFORMS PRIOR TO THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS. THE ELECTORAL REFORM LAW FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS OF 1975, WHICH SEPARATES THE ELECTION OF MAYORS FROM THOSE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS, IS A FURTHER REFLECTION OF THE TREND.

4. MESHEL ALSO SAID THAT THE NEW HISTADRUT ELECTORAL SYSTEM WILL REQUIRE EACH PARTY SPONSORING AN ELECTORAL LIST TO HOLD A PRIMARY ELECTION FOR THE HEADS OF BOTH THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LISTS AS WELL AS THE CANDIDATES FOR LESSER OFFICES. THE RESULT WILL BE THAT THE ELECTIONS WILL NO LONGER BE PURELY ON A PARTY LABEL BASIS BUT MORE ON THE BASIS OF PERSONALITIES AND VOTERS WILL IDENTIFY LESS WITH PARTIES AND MORE WITH PERSONALITIES. THIS WILL CHANGE SUBSTANTIALLY THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE LOCAL COUNCILS VIS-A-VIS THE NATIONAL HISTADRUT, AND IT POINTS THE WAY TOWARD A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 TEL AV 06122 071248Z

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE ISRAELI POLITICAL SYSTEM, WHICH MESHEL ATTRIBUTES LARGELY TO AMERICAN INFLUENCE. WITH THE WEIGHT OF PERSONALITIES GREATER THAN PARTY LOYALTIES AND IDEOLOGY, ESPECIALLY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, THE COMPOSITION OF THE KEY LABOR COUNCILS--SUCH AS TEL AVIV, HAIFA, JERUSALEM--COULD CHANGE. WITH THE ISRAELI PUBLIC INCREASINGLY THINKING IN TERMS OF PERSONALITIES, THE PARTIES WILL HAVE TO BECOME MORE RESPONSIVE TO THIS CHANGING MODD.

5. MESHEL SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER RABIN ALSO APPEARS TO BE CONSCIOUS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TREND, ESPECIALLY NOW WHEN THE LABOR PARTY IS ENGAGED IN A CRUCIAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN PRIOR TO THE PARTY CONGRESS OW SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 1977. HE DREW ATTENTION TO RABIN'S STATEMENT TO A MEETING OF REGIONAL PARTY CHAIRMAN IN TEL AVIV LAST WEEK THAT THE PARTY MUST CHOOSE ITS CANDIDATE FOR PRIME MINISTER IN ADVANCE OF THE ELECTIONS SO THAT THE VOTERS KNOW FOR WHOM THEY ARE VOTING AND THAT THE LABOR PARTY AND THE ALIGNMENT MUST FIND WAYS TO COORDINATE THEIR POLICIES IN THE GOVERNMENT AND IN THE HISTADRUT RATHER THAN HAVE PUBLIC CONFRONTATIONS ON POLICY.

6. COMMENT: IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH US, MESHEL DID NOT APPEAR ENTIRELY HAPPY WITH THE NEW TREND, ALTHOUGH ADMITTING THAT IT BROUGHT GREATER DEMOCRACY INTO THE LABOR MOVEMENT. HIS PRICIPAL CONCERN IS THAT THE LARGER POPULATION CENTERS COULD THEREBY INCREASE THEIR DEMANDS FOR RESOURCES AND WELFARE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AREAS WHICH, FOR THE SAKE OF NATIONAL INTEREST AND THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY, NEEDS THEM MOST.
TOON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION REFORM, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, LABOR UNIONS, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TELAV06122
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760337-1129
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760984/aaaacuey.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <15 JUN 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE ISTADRUT, THE LABOR PARTY, ELECTION REFORMS AND THE 1977 ELECTIONS BEGIN SUMMARY: HISTADRUT SECRETARY GENERAL MESHTEL
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IS, HISTADRUT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006